



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

For Information Contact Public Affairs
ANN HARWOOD
Telephone: (602) 514-7737
Cell: (602) 809-3683

SISTER OF ALIEN SMUGGLER SENTENCED TO 38 MONTHS FOR CONSPIRACY TO HARBOR ILLEGAL ALIENS

PHOENIX, Arizona – Cristina Franco-Beltran, 43, of Sinaloa, Mexico, was sentenced here on July 18, 2006, to 38 months by U.S. District Judge Roslyn O. Silver. Franco-Beltran pleaded guilty on December 13, 2005, to Conspiracy to Harbor Illegal Aliens.

In her plea, the defendant admitted that from 2002-2004, she had been involved in the smuggling of hundreds of illegal aliens into the United States. Her primary role was to collect the smuggling fees that family members or friends of the illegal aliens would send to her through Western Union. She collected over \$350,000 in smuggling fees from 2002-2003. Franco-Beltran was initially arrested in March 2005 for Re-entry after Deportation from United States. She pleaded guilty in that matter and was sentenced to time served in March 2006. Her sentences will be served consecutive to each other. Franco-Beltran's sister Julieta Franco-Beltran, 46, was convicted at trial in January 2006 for Conspiracy to Harbor Illegal Aliens and later pleaded guilty in a separate case to Bringing Aliens to the United States. Julieta Franco-Beltran was sentenced on June 1, 2006, in both cases to a total of 147 months

At sentencing, Judge Silver found that Cristina Franco-Beltran had no respect for the immigration laws of the United States and in fact had been previously apprehended by immigration officials on nine occasions. On each of her apprehensions, she provided a false name to the authorities.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The prosecution was handled by Lisa Jennis Settel, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-838-PHX-ROS
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